



Cordell Bank



Habitats

Rocky subtidal

Seamount

Pelagic, open ocean

Soft sediment continental shelf and slope

Key Species

Krill

Pacific salmon

Rockfish

Humpback whale

Blue whale

Dall's porpoise

Albatross

Shearwater

Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary

Sanctuary contains the most productive offshore seamount on the west coast, where the combination of ocean conditions and undersea topography creates a highly diverse marine community. The Bank rises to within 115 feet of the sea surface with water depths of 6,000 feet only a few miles away. The prevailing California Current flows southward along the coast, and the upwelling of nutrient-rich, deep ocean waters stimulates the growth of organisms at all levels of the marine food web. It is a destination feeding ground for many marine mammals and seabirds.

Research Activities

Scientists affiliated with Cordell Bank Sanctuary carry out research projects investigating this unique marine ecosystem. An ongoing integrated study examines the relationship between oceanographic conditions and the distribution and abundance of marine organisms from phytoplankton to marine birds to the great whales. Special studies focus on daily migrations and distribution of krill, the primary food for many predators. Other studies include pelagic surveys and phytoplankton sampling for the state biotoxin monitoring program.

Education Activities

Educational efforts include teaching materials on deep ocean ecology and pelagic ecosystems and teacher workshops and training classes to advance the understanding of our marine environment. Interpretive displays at several prominent visitor areas along the coast, interactive exhibits in aquariums and education centers, fields excursions, and community presentations inform the public about the Sanctuary's role in preserving the marine environment.



Location
60 miles northwest of San Francisco

Protected Area
526-square miles

Designation
May 1989

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Above: Strawberry anemone; left to right: rosy rockfish; divers need advanced skill to handle Cordell Bank's depth and currents; humpback whale

